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A Daughter of Lilith and a Daughter of Eve

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PREFACE

IN the Talmud myths of life, is one of Lilith, the earth-born woman who first companioned Adam, or man. She wedded him to matter and its fleeting forms. Then as a messenger from God, a helpmeet to lead men from earth, matter, and its illusive shadows to heaven, helping him to perceive the purity, pease, and joy of union in the soul and with the spirit — as a tie between heaven and earth, — Eve was created by God, and offered to man for his inspiration and his awakening.

In the bondage of one, ye shall perish. Through union with the other shall the door of immortality be opened unto you.

I.

"Love! If I loved I would yield to no power above or below that would hold apart from me the object of my passion."

The magnificent form of the speaker seemed to quiver from the stately head, crowned with its wavy black tresses, through its every beautiful curve to the dainty foot tapping the floor. And the undulating flush that deepened the bloom upon the cheek, the flush of light in the eye, that in unemotional hours looked lazily out from under the heavy fringe of the drooping lids, all emphasized the power that lay behind the words for their fulfilment.

"Why should one yield in love to aught but its destined reward? It is joy — nay, it is life itself. We move, we think, and all is monotony, a mere existence. We feel, we love, and all is life. Every throb of our pulse is a note in the melody of being, when it dances to the measure of love. What can compensate for the loss of that which we seek? Nothing. I would stop short of naught save death, to accomplish my aim — if once I loved," she added with a little laugh.

No one save the queenly Cleopatra Tarrasal in the strength of her peerless magnificence, would dare to have uttered words at once so intense and so antagonistic to the accepted code of femininity. As it was, a sort of startled silence fell upon the little group gathered on that seaside piazza.

Cleo was a child of the southern clime, and as beautiful, as intense, as is all tropic beauty. Daring as the rays of a southern sun, that not only nourishes into form and sweetness the orange and the rose, but begets, likewise, the tarantula and the serpent that stingeth unto death, was the nature that animated her beautiful body. She would entice through color, form, and tone, every sense that could be thrilled, and yet in such love lieth hidden the deadly peril.

A moment's silence, and the young girl at Cleo's side said, —

"You frighten me, Cleo, your idea of love seems so compelling, instead of winning. I cannot understand any joy in forcing an acknowledgment of any emotion. It seems to me that love must be like the discovery of great treasure that God has stored up for you, and hidden in the heart of another, the key to its finding resting in the voluntary blending of thought and emotions that touches the secret spring, throws open the door, and reveals to

each their portion of this great joy that enriches life."

A smile crept over the full red lips of the beautiful Cleo, who had relapsed into a manner of lazy indifference, compared to which her previous emotion had been like a sudden tempest. She turned her eyes with deliberate gaze upon the speaker and slowly said, —

"That may be your idea, Carrol, but mine is any power that wins. If the man I shall love is not my master, he shall be my slave. Mine he shall be, either through love or submission."

A chill almost of horror seemed to pass over the fair girl, who had ventured to suggest her different thought, as she gazed upon the leonine grace and power embodied in the speaker.

Just at that moment there came around the corner of the building, a fair and graceful man. As he advanced, a close observer of Cleo would have seen a change pass over her, scarce perceptible, yet suggestive of the cat-like concentration of all faculties into a perceptive state, that the animal takes on when its attention is fixed by a bird.

As he approached the group with a graceful salutation, Cleo's face animated and she motioned him to her side with a pretty little wave of her hand. A faint hesitation on his part caused the color to flicker over her countenance, and there passed into her expression a magnetic charm, — a look no son of Adam can resist, unless his soul stands guard.

Accepting the seat beside her, Richard Noyes handed her a newly-cut magazine, and said: —

"Miss Cleo, I brought you the paper on hypnotism we were speaking of last evening. It very ably sustains the argument that a person cannot be hypnotized against his will, thereby contends there are no innocent victims of this new recognition of science."

Rising, she took the book and said: —

"Oh, thanks; anything in that line interests me exceedingly; how nice to know there are such wonderful forces to work our will. I wonder if there is any limit to the power of mind — if we but know ourselves?"

As she stood in graceful unconsciousness of muscular effort, in seeming absorption in the realm of mind, she looked as fascinating as, history tells us, did her royal predecessor in name and in beauty, whose passions ruled empires and made the history of a world. She looked a woman so full of life, that emotion radiated, winning response in all sense perceptions. In her wondrous eyes was a fearless gleam, as she searched within for the mystic

faculties that obey the will.

"I have just an half hour at my disposal before my packing must be done, we leave so early in the morning," she said. "So I will go and read this article now, that we may have a little opportunity for its discussion this evening." And she walked away.

Going to her room she threw herself upon a low couch by the window, and rapidly read the article of interest in the magazine. As she finished it, she tossed the book aside, and clasping her beautiful hands above her head, gazed long and earnestly into the ever moving sea, whose waves restlessly caressed the sands before her window.

Her face at first looked veiled in its placidity, as all thought force seemed concentrated within. Then, like a sudden flash, the color leaped to her rounded cheek, swept over the marvellous throat, and followed with a gleam in the eyes as she sprung to her feet, and paced back and forth the confines of her room, as a tigress measures the limits of her cage. Finally she muttered, —

"I don't believe the power is limited. At any cost I'll test it this very night."

II.

It is just three months since Cleopatra Tarrasal experimented with her force as a hypnotizer. If her power over her subject extended to the suggestion a echeance, to-night, in this, her southern home, it will be proven. For in that last evening at the seashore they had tried some hypnotic experiments, and Cleo had succeeded in placing three subjects in hypnotic sleep, one being Richard Noyes; and during his subjective state she had laid the command upon him to appear at her home in New Orleans three months from that day, on this, the twenty-third of November. And to-night, she is awaiting the fulfilment of the test, with every breath a quivering anxiety.

She loved Richard Noyes with the fearless intensity of her wonderful nature. Yet she was not blind to the fact that he never sought her with the eagerness she felt to behold him. Instead, she realized, although every charm she was mistress of had been thrown about him, that she had been able only to exercise a sort of physical attraction upon him when he was in her presence. That he would more willingly seek the side of pretty little Carrol Ashton, in those days at the shore, was to her plainly manifest.

But she was magnificent to-night! Effect had been studied well, before she adopted that Grecian robe of white wool with golden girdle holding its soft folds to her queenly form, her black and wavy hair held in place by a golden dagger. The dress was simplicity itself, thus showing her mastery of the art of dress; for it adorned her with its grace, and yet made you only conscious of her exquisite personality. And it was suited to the hour and the rich surroundings of her luxurious home. In looking upon her one could utter the tribute Hafiz bestowed on Zuleika's beauty:

"In the midnight of thy locks,
I renounce the day;
In the ring of thy rose lips,
My heart forgets to pray."

A soft, delicious repose creeps o'er the senses in that room where sweet odors make breathing a joy; and the soft light blends its decorations into a symphony of color. It is a spot to make the soul of man unmindful of care, of suffering, of reason, of responsibility. But it was all effective to mark the power of a woman's charms. There in the midst of beauty, she was of it all,

the most beautiful.

No fervent imagination of the Orient could picture an houri in paradise more attractive.

"Hark, a ring!" A few words —

"Yes, it is his voice."

Cleo leapt to her feet, clasping her hands, pressed them to her heart as if to quell its wild beating. And then with indrawn breath exclaimed, —

"I have triumphed!"

With a mastery of self simply marvellous, her possession was regained, and all the passion of her fever of love and her sense of power was shown alone in her beauty, which was radiant.

As Richard entered the room he had a slightly embarrassed air, as of one doing some unaccountable thing; but what man, with such an apparition of beauty extending both hands in welcome, could remain untouched?

He stepped forward in his graceful way, and she half swayed toward him, just enough to bring her brow temptingly near his lips. And then, as if in response to the determining thought in her mind, his mustache swept her forehead in a swift caress.

Within himself he was bewildered as a man in a dream. He scarce knew why he was there, except an uncontrollable impulse had led him on. He had thought to apologize for his coming unannounced and uninvited. Instead, here he was with a welcome that dazzled him, and had given a greeting whose warmth startled him. But he has no time to analyze these contradictory feelings; he is in a whirlpool of sense emotions that blind his soul.

Her blush, the swift droop of her head, her low, glad exclamation of joy at seeing him were all in place, after the caress he had given her — but how had it all come about?

For a moment he was embarrassed; but Cleo's perceptions never failed her; neither did her power of will that now had so fastened itself upon him as to transfer her thought into suggestion for action on his part.

He led her to a seat; then in a most natural way they talked of his arrival in New Orleans. He had reached there only that afternoon.

"I thought I should get in, in time," he said, "to send a messenger to ascertain if you would be at home this evening, but our train was late. At first I thought to postpone my call, but really I found myself as impatient as a thwarted child, and it was impossible to resist chancing it, and coming this

evening any way."

She smiled and thought, "It is well, my will is sovereign," but only said: —

"I am very glad you did not delay my pleasure in seeing you."

After an hour passed in chat and gossip of mutual friends, and what had crept into their social experiences since last they met, he started to go, saying: —

"I am making an unwarrantably long call."

But it did not suit her purpose that he should leave her with no future command imprinted upon his unconscious will, so she pleasantly insisted their visit was not half completed.

If he could only have known, that was his moment of escape from life-long bondage; but no guardian spirit was near to whisper it, and the moment was fatal, because his sense still struggled with the world alone, his soul not having come into a knowledge of its own kindred, and it stood not upon its guard with understanding as its shield.

He stayed; the magnetism of that rich physical beauty, glittering with intellectual charm as well, held in thrall his senses.

Reaching a harp that was placed conveniently near, she said: —

"I will play for you."

Music was his love thus far in life, and it was an agreeable surprise to find she could so entertain him, as she had never before given any hint of that accomplishment. Yes, she loved melody, though the grand harmonies she could not grasp.

As her beautiful hands, with their dimpled knuckles and tapering fingers, swept across the strings of the melodious instrument, what a picture she made! And the melody was like a shimmering light, passing through the room.

The sweeping drapery of her classic robe, falling about her as softly as the lights and shadows of a moonlight eve, lost not a line of the beauty of her majestic form; and the curve and taper of her arm, as the white wool fell away in a soft mass, made a study for a sculptor.

From the dancing, sparkling melody she passed into one like a song of murmuring leaves, with a weird sort of monotony in its tone. During the repetition of this strain, she fixed her eyes upon Noyes' face; gradually, and unconsciously he passed under control of her will. With the lithe grace of a cat she moved to his side, humming still the monotonous measure she had

been playing, and touching him gently upon the eyelids, she made sure he was unconscious. Passing back to the side of the harp as quickly as she had left it, she began softly to play again, keeping up the same measure, while she spoke, and said: —

"You will come again to-morrow, and say, 'Cleo, I love you, will you be my wife?' Remember, you have not been hypnotized. Now count six and be awake."

She still played the same melody that lulled him into unconsciousness until he uttered the word six, then she broke at once into a refrain of sweetness that thrilled every nerve to listen.

For a moment Richard Noyes looked confused; then said: —

"That was a peculiar change; that minor strain had a dream-like effect upon the mind, while this seems to send life bounding through the veins."

She saw it was as she desired; he was unconscious of having been hypnotized. So pushing the harp from her she said: —

"Yes, I don't care for music that is not emotional!"

"You seem the living personification of feeling," he replied; "you sometimes give me the impression that I am torpid, or but half awake; as though you knew a keener life; an intensity, that I sometimes, as now, realize only through you."

"Perhaps you are just waking," she said, with a tender look from beneath her curling lashes. And then hurriedly rising, as if she had said more than her second thought sanctioned, she moved from him, and remained standing by her harp.

Just behind her in rich folds, were golden brocade draperies of a large window. As she stood there with the exquisite poise begotten in tireless muscle and perfect proportion, she was a living, breathing embodiment of all the beauty man attributed to the goddess of Love in the days of Greek idealism. But alas, a Venus Pandemos! She knew his soul turned not to her with longing; that the sheer force of physical beauty and her all compelling will alone brought him into her presence. Yet not a voluntary yielding of a single desire did he give her. And yet — and yet! She wavered not one instant in her determination to bind him in the yoke that love alone can make honorable, or pleasant.

And like one charmed he gazed upon her. He rose from his seat and approached her, put forth his hand and half encircled her waist; she drew back ever so slightly, but it was enough to break the spell. He drew a long

breath and whispered low, —

"Forgive me, but you are so radiant, you fascinate me. To punish myself I will say good-night," and pressing her hand, in a moment he was gone.

As he passed out of sight behind the portieres*, a smile of triumph swept across her expressive face, and she said under her breath, —

"You may go now, for you will come back; you are mine and you cannot help yourself."

III.

That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which pertaineth to earth must perish through the nature of its being. A love feeding on the mortal part must die; for all earth-born desires are but fleeting fancies for a shadow.

Two years have passed since that night, when Cleo Tarrasal rivetted the chains upon her victim, a victim as helpless as a charmed bird. They married. Passion threw its scarlet robes about them, and held in thrall their natures during his limited reign; but, as extremes are subject to the law of rapid variation, the devotee at Passion's altar first rebelled. The nature that accepts the forced in place of voluntary offering can never be satisfied. Unrequited desire must sharply lash one who would substitute the mockery of love for the divine reality.

To such natures as Cleo Tarrasal, the demon of jealousy holds the rod, and tortures alike the victim and victor. It is this self-seeking passion masquerading under the name of love, that is the father of jealousy. Love the Divine, the light of the soul, knows no such monster.

They had been married now nearly two years, and life was a torment alike to both. No peace, no harmony; a stifling of every soul emotion, life resolved itself into a contest on the animal plane of being.

Richard Noyes at times felt the revolt within, — a consciousness of a promise in his ideals of a different life than this, a life that had in it aspirations, hope, and harmony. Was that a vain dream of youth? he would sometimes wonder. Did life hold no tie between man and woman based on aught save passion, conflict, and base striving?

Alas! he lived a stranger to his own soul. But a new day is at hand.

Cleo is in Europe with a party of friends, and Richard feels nothing but a sense of relief as he puts in his time in bachelor fashion. Yet a world weariness is creeping o'er his sense, and it is in a mechanical way he goes through the social routine of a rich man's life.

Living on the crust of formal life, he scarce has a knowledge of the seething, turbulent mass of struggling humanity. Lacking understanding, he of course has no sympathy with the needs of his brothers, and the true vocation of man, — that of helping the world to right the wrongs of ages,

— is outside his ken.

Narrowed in experience by the idleness of inherited wealth, he drifts, a disappointed, aimless man, upon this little turbulent sea that lies encompassed with eternity. Out of the eternal we come; a moment we battle with the waves of time; into eternity we go again.

He is again at the seashore, but this time one of a cottage party. Among the guests is one Elizabeth Mitchell, a girl who is gradually bringing a new emotion into his life when he is with her; a peaceful, soul-uplifting calm. Every day he feels more restless when apart from her; and he seeks her side with no sense of restriction. There is something in her calm, beautiful womanhood that soothes him so.

She steps upon the piazza now, with a light wrap about her shoulders, and he rises and joins her as she starts for a walk upon the beach. She has no coquettish art, or consciousness. He wishes to walk with her — why not? her soul is her own, and so is his. Her woman's heart long ago discovered the barrenness of his life; the crying human need of sympathy that found no expression in his words.

She saw before her a soul dormant in a nature with every capacity for good; a life going to waste for want of inspiration; simply a sense existence taking the place of soul development.

As they walked along the beach their talk referred to a subject often discussed between them, — human nature.

They had just passed a tired group of picknickers who were making their way to the pier, to take the evening boat, and he said: —

"I cannot see what their lives hold to make the struggle endurable?" — They were evidently of a class of factory operatives from a neighboring coast town.

Elizabeth scanned their faces earnestly as she passed and said: —

"Earnestness of purpose makes their life not only endurable, but noble."

"How is that?"

"While it is true their lives are full of toil, and probably this is the only holiday in the year in which they can afford an outing, breathing the free air, and in sight and hearing of the singing waves, — more the shame to you and me, and all like us, who have abundance, — yet the very toil that earns what it possesses makes life earnest, and in the sympathy for one another's burdens that you find daily manifest among those who labor, you see the mark of soul nobility. The form perhaps is dwarfed or bowed, and rigid

muscles rob them of grace, but watch them closely, and you will see no mask of politeness hides hideous indifference toward one another. The spirit of brotherhood is among them. Their souls, perhaps reborn, may animate the truest civilization the earth will ever know."

"Ah, I see! you point the selfishness of aimless lives as the worm, 'i' the bud,' destroying the present flower of civilization. I don't know but you are right, although I never thought of it just that way before."

Like a vision, a mirage of his past swept before his mind's eye, and he saw its lack of true purpose, its wasted years; a flood of perceptions almost overwhelmed him. Yet under all the pain there was a soft symphony of joy. He knew now, what had led him into the light of true being, what had born into his soul the life immortal. This fair, sweet woman at his side had opened the door of paradise to him; she had brought him into his own kingdom and crowned him in the realm of spirit. The pangs of travail through which this consciousness had birth, were submerged in the waves of joy that illumined his entire being.

He walked, he spoke in a mechanical way, while his soul was singing the refrain of love. In his new wisdom he saw the subjective world as the real one. And although the crown of thorns still pressed upon his brow as a son of man, he felt his heritage as a child of God, crowning all with glory. No matter what trials fill his path on earth, strength and purpose are now his weapons, and wisdom his shield.

As they drew near the boats he said, — "Let us row."

She assented.

It was the one indulgence he would permit himself, now that he knew the truth. For one evening they should be together, untouched by humanity's tide. Alone on the waters as though eternity again enveloped them. And then, after the deeper thoughts of her developed nature had given him fresh inspiration and guidance, a store for him to live by, he would go from her, into the world, and never see her again. And she would never know what she had been to him, a veritable messenger from God.

All this was in his mind as he handed her into the boat and silently pulled from the shore.

Ah! he was a novice yet in the mysteries of the soul world. "She not know?" Why, the supreme moment of earth life can be only when two souls perceive one truth.

After long thinking, he said: —

"That is a great truth, that an aim and earnestness in its fulfilment makes life enjoyable, while sympathy with the needs of our fellows is the insignia of true nobility. I want to confess to you that a new world lies before me in the life your earnest thought has given me. I see a new meaning in life and also a new promise."

"I rejoice to hear you speak so," she responded; "such possibilities as lie hidden in your nature will enrich you beyond expression when you come into understanding of your own being. Oh, think of it! We are the children of the Infinite One, and every man is our brother. The penalty with the imprisonment of the spirit in the flesh, is labor, either with hand, or heart or brain; else the spirit wears upon itself within its prison walls. The thread upon which every bead of human life is strung, begins and ends in God. And what are we, that we should stand in the way of our brothers and attempt to live for ourselves alone?"

Her face was radiant with its high purpose to uplift him, to illumine the path that, though rugged and hard, would bring him into the light. It was the truth that rung tones of power through her words.

"You are right; and my life shall be devoted to the welfare of my fellows from now on. I feel the thrill of courage, the strength of purpose; I feel a new source of life sweeping over me as though I had but just come into maturity. I see the pursuits of past years lying like so many broken toys strewn all about me. Elizabeth, from a child within me, you have grown a man."

In low tones she solemnly said, —

"Not I; the Divinity stirreth within you."

Long they rode upon the waters, and not another word was spoken. Both hearts beat in harmony to the same music, and the language of heaven filled their thoughts, — love, the love of the spirit.

At last, softly as the notes in a dream, the words, "I love thee, I love thee," found utterance.

It was unintentional. A breath found sound and voiced the refrain of his soul. Richard was affrighted at the sound of his own voice; he felt he had violated a faith reposed in him. Not even yet had he measured the greatness of that woman beside him.

He held his breath and almost cowered, as though the word must come that would hurt him. He would have sacrificed life itself at that moment to have recalled the words. But in all his future years he blessed them. Their

result destroyed the last touch of his worldliness, the last false habit of thought, and gave him the revelation of a still purer character than even his imagination could fancy.

In tones as free and pure as an angel might use, resonant with the melody mastering the base emotions of passion, of fear, or of pride, came the words, —

"Love, love! I wonder if that word means to you what it does to me?"

"Will you tell me, loved one, what it means to you? Then I can answer." And his voice was tremulous with tenderness.

"I cannot define it though I try," she said. "But it seems as though every heart-beat would be a throb of joy, telling me I am dear to you, every breath tremulous with emotions of thanksgiving for the richness of life that giveth love, and even age, a privilege, for it brings us nearer the immortality of love. I feel this in the full consciousness that life can know no fruition of love together in the flesh. That now, you and I are bound in the eternal yoke of soul-united, and yet severed by the laws of man. It is no crime to speak our love, for the eternal union of two souls will bind in spite of life's blunders, and just obedience to social law. Yet, our speech has its penalty. From this hour, it would be a sin to tempt the flesh and grieve the spirit. You are mine, and I am yours, in the oneness of soul destiny. Having found each other in this labyrinth of life's tangled paths, and established our bond of union by this acknowledgment of love, we henceforth must live in accordance with the life of the world, and with a separation of distance. But that is only a formality of the flesh; 'soul will companion soul in spite of that.'"

A silence followed, seemingly as long as a lifetime to them. In that supreme hour, they whose lips had never met, felt the union into perfect oneness of their true selves.

"I can answer you now," he said. "Love means all to me it does to you. It means, no matter how earthly things separate us, a union with you, and a sense of supreme joy in knowing you are mine. The years to come before our souls are free will prove their strength. I have no fear that we will ever be apart one from the other in spirit, for one moment."

Then her sweet tones laid the command upon him. "And now, my love, the hour is come to say — let us word it just 'good-night' — when we part."

Silently he obeyed and rowed to the shore.

At the cottage step they paused, and under the rays of the full moon they

looked long and deep into each other's eyes. No touch of flesh, but soul met soul, and the angels rang the wedding chimes in heaven. With every measure of their being in harmony with that heavenly music, softly and tenderly they said, —

"Good-night."